

# **ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES NEWS RELEASE**



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## **2012 Kuskokwim River Salmon Fishery News Release 8 Kuskokwim River Subsistence Salmon Fishing Restrictions Emergency Order 7**

This is an announcement from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game at Bethel for subsistence salmon fishermen in the Kuskokwim River Drainage.

### **Lower Section of Subdistrict 1-B: Section 1**

Subsistence fishing is currently restricted to the use of gillnets with 4-inch or less mesh not exceeding 60-feet in length until 11:59 p.m., Thursday, June 21, 2012. On Friday, June 22, 2012 at 12:00 a.m. until Sunday, June 24, at 11:59 p.m. Section 1 will open to the use of gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh. On Monday, June 25 at 12:00 a.m. fishing with gillnets greater than 4-inch mesh will be closed.

This area is defined as, that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries upstream from a line from Apokak Slough to the southernmost tip of Eek Island to Popokamiut to a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located between the Kialik and Johnson Rivers. This area is also known as the Lower Section of commercial fishing Subdistrict 1-B. Excluded waters are non-salmon spawning tributaries: those portions of Kinak, Kialik, and Tagayarak rivers more than 100 yards upstream from the mouth of these rivers, are open with any mesh size gillnet and are not affected by these closures.

## **Upper Section of Subdistrict 1-B to Tuluksak: Section 2**

Subsistence fishing is currently restricted to the use of gillnets with 4-inch or less mesh not exceeding 60-feet in length until 11:59 p.m., Sunday, June 24, 2012. On Monday, June 25, 2012 at 12:00 a.m. until Wednesday, June 27, at 11:59 p.m. Section 2 will open to the use of gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh. On Thursday, June 28 at 12:00 a.m. fishing with gillnets greater than 4-inch mesh will be closed.

This area is defined as that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries upstream from a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located between the Kialik and Johnson Rivers to a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located approximately half a mile upstream of the Tuluksak River mouth. This section includes the slough (locally known as Utak Slough) on the northwest side of the Kuskokwim River adjacent to the Tuluksak River mouth.

## **Tuluksak to Chuathbaluk: Section 3**

Subsistence fishing is currently restricted to the use of gillnets with 4-inch or less mesh not exceeding 60-feet in length until 11:59 p.m., Thursday, June 28, 2012. On Friday, June 29, 2012 at 12:00 a.m. until Sunday, July 1, at 11:59 p.m. Section 3 will open to the use of gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh. On Friday, July 2 at 12:00 a.m. fishing with gillnets greater than 4-inch mesh will be closed. Additionally, a fish wheel used to take fish must be equipped with a livebox that contains no less than 45 cubic feet of water volume while in operation. The livebox must be checked at least once every six hours while in operation and all Chinook salmon must be returned to the water alive.

This area is defined as that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries upstream from a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located approximately half a mile upstream of the Tuluksak River mouth to a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located at the downstream edge of Chuathbaluk. This section does NOT include the slough (locally known as Utak Slough) on the northwest side of the Kuskokwim River adjacent to the Tuluksak River mouth. Excluded waters are non-salmon spawning tributaries: the Whitefish Lake drainage near Aniak and those portions of Discovery, Birch, and Swift creeks more than 100 yards upstream from the mouth of these rivers, are open with any mesh size gillnet and are not affected by these closures.

## **Chuathbaluk to the Holitna River mouth: Section 4**

Effective 12:01 a.m., Friday, June 22, 2012 until 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, July 3, 2012 subsistence fishing is restricted to the use of gillnets with 4-inch or less mesh not exceeding 60-feet in length. On Wednesday, July 4, 2012 at 12:00 a.m. until Friday, July 6, at 11:59 p.m. Section 4 will open to the use of gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh. On Saturday, July 7 at 12:00 a.m. fishing with gillnets greater than 4-inch mesh will be closed. Additionally, a fish wheel used to take fish must be equipped with a livebox that contains no less than 45 cubic feet of water volume while in operation. The livebox must be checked at least once every six hours while in operation and all Chinook salmon must be returned to the water alive.

This area is defined as that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries upstream from a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located at the downstream edge of Chuathbaluk to a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located downstream of the Holitna River mouth.

### **The Holitna River mouth to the Headwaters of the Kuskokwim River: Section 5**

Effective 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, June 27, 2012 until 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 8, 2012 subsistence fishing is restricted to the use of gillnets with 4-inch or less mesh not exceeding 60-feet in length. On Monday, July 9, 2012 at 12:00 a.m. until Wednesday, July 11, at 11:59 p.m. Section 5 will open to the use of gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh. On Thursday, July 12 at 12:00 a.m. fishing with gillnets greater than 4-inch mesh will be closed. Additionally, a fish wheel used to take fish must be equipped with a livebox that contains no less than 45 cubic feet of water volume while in operation. The livebox must be checked at least once every six hours while in operation and all Chinook salmon must be returned to the water alive.

This area is defined as that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries upstream from a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located downstream of the Holitna River mouth upstream to the headwaters of the Kuskokwim River.

### **Run Assessment**

The current Bethel Test Fishery (BTF) Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) indicates that there are not enough Chinook salmon to meet the 2012 Chinook salmon Management Objective (Management Objective) that was agreed upon by the Department, the Federal Inseason Manager, and was supported by the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (Working Group). During the Wednesday, June 20, Working Group meeting the Department and the Federal Inseason Manager presented a recommendation for a 3-day opening allowing 6-inch or smaller mesh after each section's 12-day rolling closure. After the 3-day opening fishing will be restricted to gillnet mesh of 4-inches or less in an effort to conserve Chinook salmon. The Working Group voted to not support the recommendation.

If the BTF CPUE indicates that the Management Objective is likely to be met, subsistence fishing restrictions may be reduced.

The assessment of chum and sockeye salmon at the BTF indicates that abundance of these species are low at this point, but their abundance is starting to increase and is expected to increase over the next two weeks based on historic run timing.

Further announcements will be made from the Bethel Fish and Game office and through local radio stations. News releases will be faxed to area villages and local fish processing companies.

### **For additional information concerning this news release:**

**ADF&G:** Travis Elison in Bethel 907-543-2433

**USFWS:** Gene Peltola in Bethel 907-543-3151

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